

Amendment under 37 CFR 1.111
Application No.: 10/820,025
Reply to Office Action dated April 26, 2007
October 26, 2007

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please substitute the following claims for the pending claims with the same numbers respectively:

Claims 1-2 (Cancelled):

Claim 3 (Currently amended): A method for making a conductive electroless plated powder comprising the steps of:

(I) allowing core particles which have a noble metal ion-capturing ability to capture noble metal ions, and reducing the noble metal ions so that the surfaces of the core particles support a noble metal;

(II) dispersing the core particles in an aqueous medium comprising an initial thin-film-forming solution containing nickel ions, a reducing agent, and a complexing agent comprising an organic carboxylic acid or a salt thereof to prepare an aqueous suspension, and reducing the nickel ions to form a nickel initial thin film on the surface of the core particles; and

(III) adding a first solution, which contains a nickel ion-containing solution ~~containing~~ and the [[same]] complexing agent, and a second solution, which contains a reducing agent-containing solution ~~individually and simultaneously~~ , to the aqueous suspension

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individually and simultaneously, the aqueous suspension containing the core particles having the initial thin film on the surface thereof so as to perform electroless plating and so that grainless boundaries are recognized in cross section in a direction of a thickness of the nickel film.

Claim 4 (Original): The method according to claim 3, further comprising at least one of the steps of: adjusting the amounts of said nickel ion-containing solution added and said reducing agent-containing solution added, adjusting the initial concentration of said complexing agent in said aqueous suspension, and adjusting the concentration of said complexing agent in said nickel ion-containing solution, so as to maintain the concentration of said complexing agent in said aqueous suspension in the range of 0.005 to 6 moles/l in said step (III).

Claim 5 (Original): The method according to claim 4, further comprising the step of using at least one of tartaric acid and a salt thereof as the complexing agent.

Claim 6 (Currently amended): The method according to claim 5, wherein, in said step (II), the aqueous medium is an initial thin film-forming solution containing the complexing agent, nickel ions,

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and a reducing agent, and said step (II) further comprises reducing the nickel ions to form initial thin nickel ~~[[films]]~~ film on the surfaces of the core particles, and said step (III) further comprises adding the nickel ion-containing solution and the reducing agent-containing solution to the aqueous suspension containing the core particles provided with the initial thin ~~[[films]]~~ film and the complexing agent.

Claim 7 (Original): The method according to claim 6, further comprising the step of using, before said step (III), a ratio of the sum of the surface areas of said core particles contained in said aqueous suspension to the volume of said aqueous suspension between 0.1 to 15 m²/l.

Claim 8 (Currently amended): The method according to claim 4, wherein, in said step (II), the aqueous medium is an initial thin film-forming solution containing the complexing agent, nickel ions, and a reducing agent, and said step (II) further comprises reducing nickel ions to form initial thin nickel ~~[[films]]~~ film on the surfaces of the core particles, and said step (III) further comprises adding the nickel ion-containing solution and the reducing agent-containing solution to the aqueous suspension containing the core

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particles provided with the initial thin [[films]] film the said complexing agent.

Claim 9 (Original): The method according to claim 8, further comprising the step of using, before said step (III), a ratio of the sum of the surface areas of the core particles contained in the aqueous suspension to the volume of the aqueous suspension between 0.1 to 15 m²/l.

Claim 10 (Original): The method according to claim 3, further comprising the step of using at least one of tartaric acid and a salt thereof as the complexing agent.

Claim 11 (Currently amended): The method according to claim 10, wherein, in said step (II), the aqueous medium is an initial thin film-forming solution containing the complexing agent, nickel ions, and a reducing agent, said step (II) further comprises reducing nickel ions to form initial thin nickel [[films]] film on the surfaces of core particles, and said step (III) further comprises adding the nickel ion-containing solution and the reducing agent-containing solution to the aqueous suspension containing the core particles provided with the initial thin [[films]] film and the complexing agent.

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Claim 12 (Original): The method according to claim 11, further comprising the step of using, before said step (III), a ratio of the sum of the surface areas of the core particles contained in the aqueous suspension to the volume of the aqueous suspension between 0.1 to 15 m²/l.

Claim 13 (Currently amended): The method according to claim 3, wherein, in said step (II), the aqueous medium is an initial thin film-forming solution containing said complexing agent, nickel ions, and a reducing agent, said step (II) further comprises reducing the nickel ions to form initial thin nickel ~~[[films]]~~ film on the surfaces of the core particles, and said step (III), further comprises adding the nickel ion-containing solution and the reducing agent-containing solution to the aqueous suspension containing the core particles provided with the initial thin ~~[[films]]~~ film and the complexing agent.

Claim 14 (Original): The method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of using, before the step (III), a ratio of the sum of the surface areas of the core particles contained in said aqueous suspension to the volume of said aqueous suspension between 0.1 to 15 m²/l.

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Claim 15 (Original): The method according to claim 3, further comprising the step of imparting the noble metal ion-capturing ability to the core particles by a surface treatment.

Claims 16-19 (Cancelled):